

REMARKS

Entry of the present amendment and reconsideration and allowance of this application are requested.

As a procedural note, the present amendment is being filed concurrently with a formal Request for Continued Examination (RCE) under 37 CFR §1.114. Accordingly withdrawal of the "finality" of the September 4, 2008 Official Action is in order so as to allow entry and consideration of the amendments and remarks presented herewith.

1. Discussion of Claim Amendments

Pending independent claim 1 has been revised so as to address the informality helpfully noted by the Examiner. In addition, claim 1 has been amended so as to clarify that the claimed polyacetal resin composition is substantially free from a phosphorous-containing flame retardant as disclosed in paragraph [0090] of the originally filed specification.

The processing stabilizer has also been clarified in claim 1 as being a higher fatty acid or a derivative thereof and a polyoxyalkylene glycol (i.e., the silicone-series compound has been deleted therefrom).

Accordingly, following entry of this amendment, amended versions of claims 1, 3-6 and 10-18 will remain pending herein for consideration.

2. Response to Substantive Rejections

(A) The Examiner's position

The Examiner asserts that prior claims 1, 3-6 10, 13-15 are rendered "obvious" and hence unpatentable under 35 USC §103(a) from Harashina (WO 2001/05888). Furthermore, Schuette et al (USP 4,386,178) and Sugiyama et al (USP 4,929,712) have

been respectively combined with Harashina to reject separately claims 11 and 12 under 35 USC §103(a). Applicants respectfully suggest that none of the applied references is appropriate against the presently pending claims.

(B) Discussion of the Cited references

Applicants refer to the discussion in Section 2.B on pages 7-10 of the Amendment dated July 15, 2008 for a discussion of the cited references, which discussion is expressly incorporated hereinto by reference.

(C) Comparison of the present invention and the cited references

One feature of the present invention is that the polyacetal resin composition is substantially free from a phosphorous-containing flame retardant and that it contains a specific combination of a polyacetal resin, a specific carboxylic acid hydrazide, a specific antioxidant, a specific processing stabilizer *and* a specific heat stabilizer. On the other hand, the cited references fail to disclose or suggest the above specific combination of the present invention.

As the Examiner notes, Harashina discloses a hydrazide as one example of basic nitrogen-containing compounds, an antioxidant and heat stabilizer as examples of additives, a silicon-containing flame retardant as one example of other flame retardants, and the like. However, each of the above compounds is disclosed together with other various compounds and attribute the same rank or level for each. There is no teaching leading to a combination of all the above compounds. This is also apparent from the Examples of Harashina. That is, the compositions of Examples 38-40 comprising a hydrazide do not comprise any of an antioxidant, a heat stabilizer and an additional flame retardant. Moreover, the compositions of Examples 65 and 71 comprising calcium salt of 12-hydroxystearic acid comprise heat-treated CTU guanamine as the

basic nitrogen-containing compound and do not comprise any of a hydrazide, an antioxidant and an additional flame retardant.

Thus, it is difficult to predict the above specific combination of the present invention from Harashina which has no teaching to combine each compound together, particularly in a polyacetal resin composition being substantially free from a phosphorus-containing flame retardant.

The present invention also shows unexpected results. That is, according to Harashina, since the compositions comprise either a hydrazide or calcium salt of 12-hydroxystearic acid, Harashina cannot cope with both inhibition of formaldehyde emission and inhibition of bleeding.

In contrast to Harashina, according to the present invention, both the formaldehyde emission and bleeding can be remarkably inhibited due to the above specific combination of components. Such results are clearly supported by the Examples of the present specification and would never be predicted from the cited references.

Schuetz et al disclose a combination of a polyacetal resin, a melamine resin, an antioxidant and a heat stabilizer such as a hydrazide. Sugiyama et al disclose a polyacetal resin, a thermoplastic polyurethane resin, an antioxidant and a heat stabilizer. However, no suggestion is present in either Schuetz et al or Sugiyama et al about a processing stabilizer. Furthermore, as apparent from the fact that Schuetz et al exemplify a hydrazide as a heat stabilizer, there is no concept to combine a specific hydrazide with a heat stabilizer. Thus the specific combination of the present invention is clearly distinct and would never be predicted from the cited references, even if Schuetz et al and Sugiyama et al are combined with Harashina.

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In view of the above, withdrawal of all rejections advanced under 35 USC §103(a) based on the cited references is in order. Such favorable action is solicited.

3. Fee Authorization

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fee filed, or asserted to be filed or which should have been filed herewith (or with any paper hereafter filed in this application by the attorneys of Customer No. 23117) to Account No. 14-1140.

Respectfully submitted,

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